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The Agreement

Between Science and Religion

By ORLANDO J. SMITH

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REFERENCE
DO NOT CIRCULATE

"Nature is more simple than our conception thereof; we begin with very complicated theories, and end with the most simple."—*Du Prel.*

"The plainest truths are those precisely upon which man hits last of all."—*Ludwig Feuerbach.*

"It nettles men to find that truth should be so simple."—*Goethe.*

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THE AGREEMENT

Between Science and Religion

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WE ARE DEEPLY interested in the governments, local, state and national, under which we live, in their laws and regulations, in the protection and other advantages which they give to us, and in the duties which they exact from us. To a larger degree we are interested in the government of the universe to which we are subject without conscious choice of our own. If we do not like the community in which we live, we may remove to another, and we may get definite information concerning that other before making the removal. We may go east, west, north or south; to Canada, to Europe or to the antipodes. But the government of the universe does not grant to us the privilege of removal or expatriation, for there is no other universe to go to. Even if we suffer annihilation in death, we go nowhere, not elsewhere. Our fathers, as far back as history or fancy can carry us, were subjects of this universe, and governed by precisely the same natural laws that govern us, as our descendants will be, and as the life in the remotest planets must be, forever.

We may alter or improve our man-made laws and systems of government. We may exercise the right of protest or of revolution. Thrones have yielded, time-hon-

ored systems have fallen, in response to human demands. But we cannot change or amend the government of the universe. Often we raise our puny arms in protest against pain, bereavement or misfortune, but we make no impression upon the cosmic order. We have produced no army strong enough, no conqueror great enough, to change in the slightest degree a law of Nature.

We hunger to comprehend the government of the universe, to know whether its ways are really just or unjust, what our relations are to it, and what ground we have for hope or fear from this stern, mysterious and unchanging power which enfolds us.

Every religious cult, from the lowest to the highest, has had one central motive—the explanation of the government of the universe. Science, in its higher reaches, seeks to solve precisely the same problem. Religion would explain the relations of the individual soul to the government of the universe. Science would explain the relations of all truth to the supreme adjustment. It shall be my task to inquire concerning the results of these two investigations—one religious and the other scientific—of the government of the universe, and to ascertain whether there exists any agreement between them.

I

The Foundation of Science

WHAT progress has been made by science in the explanation of the government of the universe?

The science of logic has a fundamental postulate—the uniformity of Nature. "The uniformity of the course of Nature," says John Stuart Mill, "will appear as the ultimate major premise of all inductions." (System of Logic, 202.) He means by this that all reasoning is based upon the postulate that the processes of Nature are changeless—that they will be as they have been, that two and two will make four, that gravitation will suffer no impairment, that the same cause will produce the same effect—and that the processes of Nature are harmonious, no process being in conflict with any other.

That the processes of Nature are changeless is a complete statement, and it has the dignity and majesty which we would associate with the supreme adjustment. That the processes of Nature are in harmony, not in conflict, is also an inspiring statement, though it leaves much to be explained. We would know the grounds of this agreement, the key to this supreme harmony.

Uniformity means of one form. What is Nature's one form, or process, or law, or principle, upon which her harmonies rest? What is this underlying fact?

The logicians define this underlying fact in the term "invariable sequence." Of the meaning of "invariable sequence" Mr. Mill says: "Invariability of succession is found by observation to obtain between every fact in Nature and some other fact which has preceded it. . . . The invariable antecedent is termed the cause; the invariable consequent, the effect." (System of Logic, 213.)

The key to the uniformity of Nature is found by the logicians in invariable sequence, and invariable sequence means that the processes of Nature are generative; that the cause begets the effect; that the effect is true to its cause—that the apple is true to its flower, the flower to its tree, the tree to its seed. Invariable sequence is not a thing unknown to us. It is the familiar principle *that consequences are true to their antecedents.*

I purpose to trace briefly the working of this principle of invariable consequences in different fields of experience, beginning with the simplest human affairs.

In Common Experience

One has consequences in view when he strikes a match, sharpens a pencil, sets a pot to boil, mends a fence. Shall I change my coat? take another cup of coffee? walk or ride? Each question will be decided in accordance with my estimate of the results. We plant a seed, a rosebush, an orchard, with the expectation that they will pay us back. We study a lesson, patch the roof and build roads with the same expectation.

Regret is usually a reminder of a neglect or misjudgment of consequences, while repentance and reformation indicate a waking up concerning consequences. Our interest, curiosity, anxieties, fears, hopes and ambitions are concentrated upon consequences. We seek advice when we are doubtful about consequences. Precepts and examples elucidate consequences. We work and rest, eat and drink, scheme and plan, spend and save, for consequences. We indulge or sacrifice ourselves for consequences. Cæsar expended a million lives for earthly glory; St. Simeon Stylites scourged himself for eternal gain.

That mind is the strongest which has the clearest judgment of consequences. The fools are those who are ignorant of consequences. The child must be guarded because it knows little of consequences. What we know of narcotics, stimulants, antidotes, hygiene, surgery, chemistry, agriculture, mechanics, commerce, culture, we know through the observation of consequences. The best razor, plough, school, sanitary system, plan of social betterment, is that which produces the best results. The shrewdest maxims of trade are built upon the observation of consequences. The science of political economy aims to distinguish and mark the good and evil results of different systems of land tenure, taxation, trade and finance. The science of government would determine what political system is best for a people. And so on through the whole of human experience, knowledge

seeks to distinguish that which has the best results from that which has inferior or evil results.

In Reasoning

Logic builds fundamentally, as we have already observed, upon the principle that consequences are true to their antecedents. Reasoning builds primarily also, and in all its details, from the simplest deductions of common sense to the most subtle abstractions, upon the same principle.

Reasoning *a priori* is from cause to effect; *a posteriori* from effect to cause. The syllogism is a form by which one may advance from antecedent premises to a consequence. Conclusions, corollaries, deductions, judgments, inferences, discoveries and estimates are consequences —each following from an antecedent or antecedents.

Inductive reasoning is an advance from antecedent facts to a conclusion; deductive reasoning is from a general principle, established from observation of its antecedents or consequences, to a conclusion. When antecedents or consequences are unknown, we fall back on analogy, the substitution of something similar with known antecedents or consequences. For example, the people of the United States, embarking upon a colonial policy in which they have had no previous experience, must seek knowledge in the consequences of the colonial expansion of England, Spain, France and other countries.

In analysis we seek to comprehend a whole by investi-

gating its component parts. If water contains matter with injurious consequences, we know that it is bad; if it contains matter with no harmful or disagreeable consequences, we know that it is good.

Even in reasoning through sight or hearing, we must depend upon antecedents or consequences. I observe a number of strangers who sit opposite to me in a car. I know, through antecedent experience, that they are men. I judge that one is old, because he has gray hair and wrinkles, the consequences of age. Another, because his hands show the consequences of toil, I judge to be a laborer. Another wears glasses, the consequences of defective vision; another shows the consequences of drink, another of worry, and so on. One speaks, and his voice shows the consequences of education and culture; the voice of another shows the consequences of ignorance.

If I ride through the country in a district unknown to me, the sights will tell me much about the people. The condition of the fields and buildings on one place will inform me that the farmer is tidy and industrious, and on another place they will tell a different story. The condition of a farmer's horse will give some idea of the farmer's character. Other signs will inform me where thrift abides, where poverty, where self-respect, where slovenliness.

Facts, theories, ideas, principles, have antecedents and consequences as distinct as tangible things. We judge the value of a machine, a field, a cow, a pig, by what it will produce; a picture, a scene, a play, a spectacle, a

poem, a song, a book, a thought, by what it gives back to us; a creed, a plan, a policy, a system, a philosophy, by what we believe its consequences are or will be.

We estimate a nation by its history, its antecedent record. The calculation of future events is based on antecedent knowledge. We must judge what will be by what has been. We search alike for good seeds and evil germs that we may propagate the one, and destroy the other.

To comprehend an unknown seed, we plant it and observe its consequences. To comprehend an unexplained crime, we search for its antecedents. The process of reasoning, even of the most abstract reasoning, is the same. The farmer and the seafaring man, the statesman and the laborer, the philosopher and the detective, use one and the same process of reasoning—the testing of antecedents by consequences or of consequences by antecedents. We are unable to think of antecedents and consequences as being other than invariable—of peaches as growing on apple trees, or of acorns that produce potatoes.

In Ethics

Beneath the many conflicting schools of morals there is a fundamental agreement—that the acts of man must be judged by their consequences. Aristotle's theory of "the mean," the avoidance of excess, teaches that moderation will produce the best consequences; the cynics hold that plain living will give exemption from fear, anxiety and disappointment; the hedonists, and to some

extent the epicureans, commend the acts which produce pleasure; the stoics hold that the acts unmoved by passion, grief or fear will produce the better manhood; the utilitarians, that those acts are best that produce the greatest good for the greatest number. Mandeville and Helvetius, who approve of the acts based on self-interest, hold that the consequences of selfishness are best for the individual. The philosophers who hold that morals are a product of human association mean thereby that man has discovered through experience what is most advantageous for society and for the individual. Theology teaches that the greatest virtue consists in submission to the will of God, eternal happiness being the consequence of submission, and eternal pain the consequence of rebellion.

There appears to be no theory of morals that is not the result of the observation of the consequences, or of speculation concerning the consequences, of human action. How do we know that truth is better than falsehood? Because we are better pleased with ourselves when we speak truthfully than when we lie; because truth is essential to understanding; because we despise lying in others; because lying leads to confusion, uncertainty, enmity, and to other evil consequences. And so also we have formed a judgment of loyalty and treachery, kindness and cruelty, sincerity and hypocrisy, by their consequences.

We know that certain actions are right and others wrong, as we know that bread is good and straw bad for

food; that cleanliness is better than filthiness; that the way to walk is forward, not backward; that mirth is pleasanter than grief.

As the value of a machine is shown in its working, and the value of a tree by its fruit, so is the good or evil in our actions determined by their consequences.

In Mathematics

In arithmetic the antecedent *two plus two* equals the consequence *four;* the antecedent *nine minus seven* equals the consequence *two.* We may traverse the whole course from the simplest calculation in arithmetic to the most intricate problem in mathematical physics or the theory of functions, and we shall find in each and all the same invariable relation between antecedent and consequence.

The perfect balance between antecedent and consequence is the vital part in all mathematical reckoning, and is expressed or understood in the fundamental axioms and principles of the science.

In Physics

We live in a world in which, if science and philosophy do not err, there is ceaseless motion everywhere, and perfect rest nowhere. There is motion in the heart of the granite mountain, in the minutest portions of the human body; motion great and insignificant, perceptible and imperceptible, disastrous and beneficent. The earth moves in its ceaseless journey around the sun at the rate of eight-

een miles a second, one thousand and eighty miles a minute—as if one should fly from New York to Yonkers in one second, to Albany in ten seconds, to Buffalo in thirty seconds, to Chicago in one minute, to San Francisco in three minutes—one thousand times faster than an express train, fifty times the speed of a rifle bullet. We are disturbed often by our own little projects, inventions and affairs, but we are not fearful that the bulky earth will come to harm in its mad course, nor would we know that it moves at such speed, or that it moves at all, if the astronomers had not demonstrated the fact. We are convinced that the astronomers have discovered regularity and precision in the movements of the heavenly bodies, that their forecasts of these movements are trustworthy, and that Nature, in the large, in her greater and grander manifestations, is ruled by order.

What is the key to this precision and regularity? Newton, in his third law of motion, gives an explanation of the phenomena of universal motion which is accepted as the fundamental postulate of physics: "To every action there is an equal and opposite reaction."

"If fire doth heate water, the water reacteth againe . . . upon the fire, and cooleth it," says Sir K. Digby (A. D. 1644). The knapsack exacts from the soldier who carries it an expenditure of force equal to its weight. Let me strike a stone wall with a gloved fist, and it will give back a gloved blow in response. The wall will be gloved, even as my fist is gloved, at the point of contact.

Let me strike hard with bare knuckles, and I shall be convinced that Nature gives even to senseless things some powers of resistance, of defense, even of resentment. If I should be thrown upon the stone wall by accident, still the wall will return the blow with equal force. Nature's ways are exact—strain for strain, blow for blow.

"Without the axiom that action and reaction are equal and opposite, astronomy could not make its exact predictions," says Herbert Spencer (First Principles, 193). As astronomy discerns the balance between action and reaction—that consequences are true to their antecedents —in the remotest regions accessible to human vision, and in the most tremendous phenomena, so chemistry discovers the same accurate adjustment among the smallest particles of matter of which we have any knowledge. This is illustrated by the universal practice of chemists in writing down every chemical interaction as an equation: so much of this plus so much of that *equals* the result.

A reaction is the consequence of an action, an effect is the consequence of a cause, a result is the consequence of an antecedent. It is evident that the words *reaction*, *effect*, *result* and *consequence* express different manifestations of one law, usually called the Law of Causality, though it would be, I believe, more correctly named the Law of Balance, meaning thereby that an antecedent and its consequence are equivalent, reciprocal or com-

pensatory to each other—that one balances the other, that consequences are true to their antecedents.

Returning to the fact that there is ceaseless motion everywhere, and perfect rest nowhere, we perceive that this ceaseless motion is regulated by equivalence, reciprocity or compensation between antecedents and consequences. Throughout the universe reaction unceasingly balances action, effect unceasingly balances cause, consequence unceasingly balances antecedent. And this state of balance explains perfectly the precision and order in the processes of Nature.

The Harmony in Truth

The simplest truth is in harmony with all other truth. Any truth concerning the system of Nature must agree with, and through its relations include, all truth concerning the system of Nature.

Modern science recognizes that Kepler's three laws of planetary motion are covered by Newton's laws of motion—that planetary motion is governed by precisely the same laws as all other motion. It is true also that Newton's three laws of motion are included in a single fundamental principle. His first law covers the fact that the motion of a body cannot be accelerated or changed in course "except so far as it may be compelled by force" to do so; that is, it will change only as it is compelled by *cause* tc do so. His second law—"change of motion is proportional to force applied, and takes

place in the direction of the straight line in which the force acts"—means that the consequence of a force applied must correspond accurately with its antecedent. His third law—"To every action there is an equal and opposite reaction"—means that the consequence of an action is equal to its antecedent. Each of Newton's three laws of motion is included definitely by its own terms in the principle that consequences are true to their antecedents.

The Theory of Evolution

Evolution, as expounded by Darwin, deals fundamentally with the theory of "Natural Selection," which is defined as follows by the Century Dictionary:

> "The fact of the survival of the fittest in the struggle for existence—which means that those animals and plants which are best adapted, or have the greatest adaptability, to the conditions of their environment do survive other organisms which are less adapted, or less capable of being adapted, to such conditions."

The word *environment*, used in connection with the theory of evolution, is defined by the Century as "The sum of the agencies and influences which affect an organism from without." That is, it is the sum of the *causes* which affect an organism from without.

The organism is the product of two groups of influences—the one group, environment, from without; the other, inherited nature and other conditions, from within. The organism is the exact sum of these antecedent causes. In whatever state the organism survives, it is the conse-

quence of these causes. If the organism perishes, its death is the result of one or more of these antecedents.

Everything—a seed, a fish, a man, a government, a race, a civilization—is the exact product, the complete sum, of all the antecedents that have produced or influenced it. The theory of evolution is a statement of the working, in one very important line of inquiry, of the principle that consequences are true to their antecedents.

Other Important Modern Theories

What relation do the modern theories—modern in their general acceptance, not in their origin—of the conservation of energy, of the indestructibility of matter and of the ceaselessness of motion, bear to the principle that consequences are true to their antecedents?

The axiom of the conservation of energy is expressed as follows: "When one form of energy disappears, its *exact equivalent* in another form takes its place." The axiom of the indestructibility of matter may be expressed in the same terms: "When one form of matter disappears, its *exact equivalent* in another form takes its place." It is plain that the theory of the conservation of energy and the theory of the indestructibility of matter are not two theories; they constitute one theory—that force and matter are indestructible—the meaning of which is that in the transformation of force or matter there is no loss, no waste; that the consequence is equivalent to the antecedent.

The theory that motion is ceaseless means that there is no halt or break in the transformations of Nature, that the relation between cause and effect will have no end, that the time will never come when an antecedent will have no consequence.

Are Natural Processes Compensatory?

Can we say that the equivalents which return ceaselessly in motion and transformation are compensatory? Yes; the return of an exact equivalent is exact compensation. Heat is the compensation for the fuel that produces it; electricity is the compensation for the energy that is transformed into it; one molecule of water is the compensation for two atoms of hydrogen and one atom of oxygen. A definite amount of matter or force pays for exactly the same amount in another form. That which disappears and that which succeeds are mutually compensatory. Fuel pays for heat, and heat pays for fuel. The account balances perfectly. Nature has no profit and loss account, no bad debts, no failures in compensation.

The assumption that anything can exist in the physical world without exact compensation appeals to the scorn alike of science and of common sense. Our patent office in Washington refuses to consider devices to produce perpetual motion because effect without cause, power without compensation, is impossible.

The Fundamental Law

Tracing the axiom of the uniformity of Nature to its foundation, we have observed that the principle that consequences are true to their antecedents is the fundamental postulate of reasoning. We have observed also that precisely the same principle—that consequences are true to their antecedents—is the fundamental postulate of ethics, of mathematics, of physics, and also of the theory of evolution. We have observed also that the same principle appears invariably as the test of truth in human experience, alike in the simplest affairs and in the higher reaches of knowledge.

We have observed also that the theory of the indestructibility of force and matter is an extension of the principle that consequences are true to their antecedents to this extent—that consequences are compensatory. We have observed that the theory of the ceaselessness of motion is also an extension of the same principle to this effect—that the unvarying relation between antecedent and consequence is ceaseless and eternal.

The conclusion from these observations is plain: that the universe is governed by one law—*that consequences are true to their antecedents; that consequences are ceaseless and compensatory*. This is, I believe, the supreme law of Nature, single and fundamental, in which all other explanations of the system of Nature and all truth converge and have their center.

II

The Foundation of Religion

OF THE antiquity and universality of religion no one can speak with more authority than Edward B. Tylor, who ranks perhaps as the foremost investigator of primitive beliefs. In considering the theory that there must be tribes so low as to be destitute of religious faith, he says:

"Though the theoretical niche is ready and convenient, the actual statue to fill it is not forthcoming. The case is in some degree similar to that of the tribes asserted to exist without language or without the use of fire; nothing in the nature of things seems to forbid the possibility of such existence, but as a matter of fact the tribes are not found. Thus the assertion that rude non-religious tribes have been known in actual existence, though in theory possible, and perhaps in fact true, does not at present rest on that sufficient proof which, for an exceptional state of things, we are entitled to demand."—Primitive Culture, i. 418.

Concerning the harmonies in religious beliefs, Tylor also says:

"No religion of mankind lies in utter isolation from the rest, and the thoughts and principles of modern Christianity are attached to intellectual clues which run back through far pre-Christian ages to the very origin of human civilization, perhaps even of human existence."—Primitive Culture, i. 421.

Herbert Spencer says:

"Of religion, then, we must always remember that amid its many errors and corruptions it has asserted and diffused *a supreme verity*. From the first, the recognition of this supreme verity, in however imperfect a manner, has been its vital element; and its

various defects, once extreme, but gradually diminishing, have been so many failures to recognize in full that which it recognized in part. The truly religious element of religion has always been good; that which has proved untenable in doctrine and vicious in practice has been its irreligious element; and from this it has ever been undergoing purification."—First Principles, 104.

What progress has been made by religion in the explanation of the government of the universe?

If we would answer this question, we must first inquire concerning the actual meaning of the great fact which we call religion—of universal religion, of all religion, and not of one branch of faith. What seed produced, what cause explains, this widespread and enduring growth? Where shall we find the "supreme verity" to which Spencer refers, and the harmony of which Tylor speaks?

It would be useless to search for a ground of agreement in all of the thought of the world concerning religion, for the thinking on the subject has been voluminous and endless, good and bad, sane and insane. Nor should we expect to find an essential harmony in all religious organizations, great and small, temporary and permanent, powerful and insignificant. It is conceivable that a sect claiming to be religious is really irreligious.

We should seek for the essential meaning of religion in the broad principle or principles which have been accepted by great masses of men in places and times wide apart; in the permanent manifestations of religious sentiment, and in the instinctive, spontaneous or untaught beliefs common to primitive men which survive

in more highly developed form among the enlightened. And we should seek for it finally in the harmony of belief in the great religious organizations now in existence; for they must contain, in the natural order of growth, that which is worthy of survival in the religious faith that has preceded them.

The Belief That the Soul Is Accountable for Its Actions

"I entertain a good hope," says Socrates, "that something awaits those who die, and that, as was said long since, it will be far better for the good than the evil." The belief in a judgment after death is very old. Man has been so impressed usually by his accountability for his sins—by "the dread of something after death"—that he has sought means of escape from it as he would from wild beasts, from flood or from fire. What is the inner significance of this conviction?

The knowledge of primitive man begins, as all knowledge begins and continues, with consequences. He discovers that water quenches thirst, game is found under certain conditions, a cave gives shelter, friction brings fire, the sun yields heat and light, some plants are poisonous, frost withers, lightning kills.

The first lesson learned by the infant is the lesson of consequences. The mother is the source of food, protection and tenderness. Later the child learns that through effort it can walk; that some things are hurtful

and others helpful; some bitter, some sweet; some hot, some cold; some heavy, some light. It discovers that some actions are beneficial and may be safely repeated; that others are injurious and should be avoided. The beneficial it recognizes as good, the harmful as evil. Before it can speak its first word it comprehends that certain causes produce certain effects—that consequences are true to their antecedents.

I believe that the sense of accountability was in the nature of things the first religious sentiment in the mind of man; that it was based originally and still rests upon cause and effect, which are apparent to the dull as well as to the enlightened; that the lower men perceived that the fruits of certain acts and things were good and of others bad, and that this perception led inevitably, in the infancy of thought, to the recognition of a definite relation between cause and effect.

Man's belief in his accountability—that is, in cause and effect—is fundamental. It begins with his first rational consideration of his relations to the external world and to the order of Nature, which he will later deify. Nature has two imperative commands which primitive man hears constantly—"Thou shalt" and "Thou shalt not." His sense of dependence in the presence of superhuman forces, some being terrifying and others beneficent, impels him to believe that he is responsible to some power which administers rewards and penalties, determines consequences. As his mind grows, the horizon of his account-

ability extends until it passes beyond the confines of this life, and he anticipates that, in the after-life, it will be "far better for the good than the evil."

The theory of "a standard of duty prescribed by something loftier than immediate advantage," as Brinton expresses it, which was recognized dimly by the lower tribes, has been accepted by the later forms of faith. There is no religious organization of age or substance now in existence that does not teach the complete subjection and responsibility of the individual to some superhuman power or powers.

The doctrine *that the soul is accountable for its actions* is bedded in the foundations of religion, entering completely into the life here and into the life hereafter. It explains worship and propitiation; it lies at the base of all religious theories of reward and retribution, of a day of judgment, of salvation and damnation, of heaven and hell.

The Belief That the Soul Survives the Death of the Body

Tylor claims (Primitive Culture, i. 424) "as a minimum definition of religion, the belief in spiritual beings," which appears (p. 425) "among all low races with whom we have attained to thoroughly intimate relations." He defines "the belief in spiritual beings" (p. 427) as including in its full development "the belief in souls and *in a future state.*"

This belief, he says (p. 426), is "the groundwork of the philosophy of religion, from that of savages up to that of civilized man;" and constitutes (p. 427) "an ancient and world-wide philosophy."

Grant Allen says:

"Religion, however, has one element within it still older, more fundamental, and more persistent than any mere belief in a God or gods—nay, even than the custom of supplicating and appeasing ghosts or gods by gifts and observances. That element is the conception of *the life of the dead.* On the primitive belief in such a life all religion ultimately bases itself."—The Evolution of the Idea of God, 42.

Brinton says:

"I shall tell you of religions so crude as to have no temples or altars, no rites or prayers; but I can tell you of none that does not teach the belief of the intercommunion of the spiritual powers and man."—Religions of Primitive Peoples, 50.

D'Alviella says:

"The discoveries of the last five-and-twenty years, especially in the caves of France and Belgium, have established conclusively that as early as the mammoth age man practiced funeral rites, *believed in a future life,* and possessed fetiches and perhaps even idols."—Hibbert Lectures, 15.

Huxley says:

"There are savages without God in any proper sense of the word, but there are none without ghosts."—Lay Sermons and Addresses, 163.

Herbert Spencer says that the conception of the soul's survival of physical death,

"along with the multiplying and complicating ideas arising from it, we find everywhere—alike in the arctic regions and the tropics;

in the forests of North America and in the deserts of Arabia; in the valleys of the Himalayas and in African jungles; on the flanks of the Andes and in the Polynesian islands. It is exhibited with equal clearness by races so remote in type from one another that competent judges think they must have diverged before the existing distribution of land and sea was established—among straight haired, curly haired, woolly haired races; among white, tawny, copper colored, black. And we find it among peoples who have made no advances in civilization as well as among the semi-civilized and the civilized."—Sociology, ii. 689.

Recognition of the survival of the soul is lacking in no important religious cult of which we have accurate knowledge, save the ancient Hebrews, who believed that all souls went at death to a vague and sepulchral hereafter which could not be called life. The modern Hebrews repudiate the materialism of early Judaism. For more than six hundred years the Jewish church has accepted the doctrine of "the resurrection of the dead" in the creed of Maimonides.

In the same way the Chinese have repudiated Confucius. While the thought of Confucius is materialistic, the Chinese religions are profoundly spiritualistic. Not even Confucius, the adored and venerated philosopher of the Chinese, nor the writers of the Old Testament, could wean their followers permanently from the belief in a future life.

The religion that is universal or lasting—as distinguished from beliefs which are temporary, isolated, or based on speculation or authority—tolerates no limitation upon the after-life of man. Here and there some

teacher or prophet has proclaimed that only women, or the married, or the great or the good, or even that no one, will survive death, but such theories have left no permanent impression upon the religious convictions of mankind. The great religious organizations now in existence hold that all mankind will survive death.

The Belief in a Supreme Power of Adjustment

So far as our definite knowledge extends, the belief in superhuman influences or powers is universal, accepted alike by the savage and the philosopher; by the deist, pantheist and atheist, as well as by the theist. The agnostics, even, do not deny the existence of a something higher up, beyond us; they believe that it exists, and that it is unknowable.

It is sometimes said that Buddhism is a godless religion, and this assertion has been used as a foundation for the assumption that a belief in God is not fundamental in religion. It may be that Buddhism recognizes no supreme being, but it is not true that Buddhism acknowledges no supreme power of adjustment. No religion recognizes more completely than Buddhism the eternal forces of reward and retribution, as is illustrated in Karma, the law of just consequences.

Primitive man had a low or dull conception of the overruling power. Sometimes he located it in a pebble or great rock; in a hill or mountain; in the dawn, sun, moon or stars; in a mummy or an idol; in his own an-

cestor; even in animals, fishes or reptiles. In whatever form he recognized it, however, it was to him a power of adjustment, to which he acknowledged subjection.

The primitive interpretations of the supreme power improved with man's growth in culture. The lower conceptions gave way to something better, and these to something still better—fetichism to idolatry, idolatry to polytheism, polytheism to monotheism.

In contrast with the narrow views of primitive men, the enlightened sects have attributed the most sublime qualities to the supreme order or ruler. A divine power is recognized in Varuna, the chief deity of the early Aryans; in Brahma, the absolute of the Hindoos; in Jehovah, the almighty of the Hebrews and Christians; in Odin, the all-father of the Norsemen; in Zeus, the highest deity of the Greeks; in Jupiter, the chief god of the Romans; in Allah, the one God of the Mohammedans. The strongest words expressive of beneficence and omnipotence are applied habitually to God—the providence, the divine, the infinite, the eternal, the all-powerful, the all-present, the all-holy, the immutable, the most high, the ruler of heaven and earth, the king of kings, the light of the world, the sun of righteousness. Always he is the God who rewards the good and punishes the evil; the God who administers compensation—the *supreme power of adjustment.*

III

The Agreement

WE HAVE, then, three fundamental religious beliefs:

1. *That the soul is accountable for its actions.*

2. *That the soul survives the death of the body.*

3. *In a supreme power of adjustment.*

The belief *that the soul is accountable for its actions* is the recognition that the law of invariable consequences applies to the individual soul, that the good shall fare better than the evil, that men shall reap as they sow.

The belief *that the soul survives the death of the body* is the recognition that accountability does not end with the death of the body; that the wrongs which are not righted here must be righted elsewhere; that the good which is not rewarded here must be rewarded hereafter; that there can be no break in the processes of accountability. As science assumes that cause and effect, action and reaction, motion and transformation, are ceaseless in the physical world, so religion assumes that cause and effect, actions and consequences, are ceaseless in the soul of the individual. The religious doctrine of ceaseless moral accountability is identical with the scientific doctrine of ceaseless cause and effect. As science postulates that

matter and force are indestructible, so religion postulates that the human soul is indestructible.

The belief *in a supreme power of adjustment* is the necessary corollary of the two preceding beliefs. The doctrines that the actions of the individual will be balanced by their results, and that this process does not cease with death, include the recognition of a power, supreme and eternal, that administers rewards and penalties, determines consequences.

Combined, read from one into the other, what is the message conveyed by these three fundamental religious beliefs? Are they in harmony or in conflict? is the message discordant, or feeble, or subtle, or unworthy of the great fact which we call religion? or is it harmonious, simple and clear, a noble interpretation of divine truth? This is the message of the fundamental religious beliefs: *That man is subject ceaselessly to the law of invariable and compensatory consequences, to a supreme power of adjustment.*

This interpretation of the meaning of religion is not the interpretation of one sect or church, of one time or place; it is the interpretation of all sects and churches that can be classed as religious, and of all times and places in which religion has been manifest. It is not the product of speculation or inspiration; it is the product of all human experience bearing upon the subject of religion. The meaning of religion is found in its own history. Religion contains within itself its own story, as the rocks

contain within themselves their own story. The message of religion is not vague, subtle or unworthy; it is plain, easy to comprehend; it is lofty and good. Mankind's recognition of religion as something holy, sacred and divine is fully justified by the interpretation of religion revealed by the history of religion—*that man is subject ceaselessly to the law of invariable and compensatory consequences.*

We have observed the harmony in the scientific explanations of the system of Nature—that each explanation points accurately to a higher and single explanation. And we now observe the same harmony in the fundamental conceptions of religion, which point unerringly to the same explanation, single and supreme, reached by science.

Religion, dealing with the relations of the individual soul to the government of the universe, rests with the recognition of eternal justice—that human action is ceaseless and compensatory. Science, dealing with matter and force, holds that physical action is ceaseless and compensatory. Advancing into the realm of mathematics, logic and ethics, science also proclaims that the perfect balance between antecedent and consequence, or cause and effect, is fundamental in all.

The scientific conception of *physical* action is this: *It is ceaseless and compensatory.*

The religious conception of *human* action is this: *It is ceaseless and compensatory.*

These two conceptions are identical. Both are interpretations of one law—the law of invariable consequences, of ceaseless compensation.

The two conceptions are not identical by chance or accident. The uniformity of Nature demands that they shall be identical.

We have no difficulty in thinking of physical consequences as invariable. All experience shows that they are invariable. Extending this one law of invariable consequences into the realm of the soul, we perceive that the one law establishes the religious theory of moral accountability, and the rightness of the cosmic order. I cannot doubt that this one law is that which religious thought has sought to comprehend in all stages of culture, and with increasing success as men have grown in knowledge. The very same law which is recognized by science as fundamental in the physical world, establishes perfect justice, infinite and eternal, when extended into the world of souls. Applied to matter and force, this one law explains the marvelous order in the material universe; applied to the individual, it becomes the noblest philosophy that the human mind can grasp. For it explains the dark problem of evil, and it vindicates the justice of God.

Shall we say that this one law operates only in the physical world? Then we deny the uniformity of Nature. Shall we say that we must not claim compensation for the soul because we cannot follow the soul and trace out its complete compensations? That is not the method

of science. Newton does not say that gravitation exists only so far as one can see or observe it. He affirms that gravitation is universal. Modern science affirms also that gravitation and all other laws and processes of Nature are universal. The science of astronomy has advanced only through the postulation that the very same laws of gravitation and of cause and effect operate in the remotest parts of the universe as they operate here—that these laws are there because they are here. Scientific minds are bold and courageous in affirming the uniformity of Nature. Religious minds may find inspiration and good example in this lofty courage, in this sublime faith, of science. Religious men may take their stand also, firmly and impregnably, upon the uniformity of Nature. As scientific men affirm that the law is the same here, there and everywhere, and that distance or time or transformation cannot change the law, so religious men may affirm that the law of compensation is there beyond the grave because it is here, that distance or time or death cannot change the law.

Religion and science are in agreement, not in conflict. They have never been in real conflict. The appearance of conflict has been due to the misunderstanding and misinterpretation of both religion and science through the ages in which men have been groping and toiling upward from darkness to light.

The scientific explanations of Nature have advanced constantly in breadth—into the uniform, the boundless,

the universal, the changeless, the ceaseless, the deathless. Upon these broad grounds religion and science meet—on the ground of life, not death; of persistence, not annihilation; of right, not wrong; on the ground of the uniformity of Nature: that the consequences of human action are as definite as the consequences of chemical action; that the law of compensation which operates in the realm of physics acts with the same unfailing certainty, and with the same eternal ceaselessness, upon the soul of man.

CRITICISM of the foregoing matter is invited by the author, whose address is 45 Park Place, New York.

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